

improve the quality of the population, both excellent, but one—being eugenic—excelling over the other. We may take the short view and confine our efforts to improving the existing population, by attacking the environment and making the best of the material we have at our disposal; or, *in addition to this*, we may take the long view and, by the encouragement of parenthood among the best people, see to it that each succeeding generation is made of better material than the last.

Here we immediately come up against the crying need for research. Who are the "best people"? It is a comparatively simple matter to discover whether the population in any particular country is large or small and likely to grow greater or less. But who can say whether it is good or bad, and growing better or worse? In order to be able to answer systematically these fundamentally important questions, clearly the first step to take is to try to analyse the quality of the existing population. I suggest that the problem may conveniently be broken up into parts; random samples of various classes of the community—infants, school children, young adults, mature adults, the middle-aged, the old—should be critically examined in representative regions of the country (if we confine our attention to our own nation). This survey would have to be repeated periodically in order to throw light on the general trend under each head. Broadly, we should want to know whether, as a nation, we are growing (1) *physically*, stronger and healthier; (2) *mentally*, more intelligent and efficient; (3) *temperamentally*, more self-controlled, stable yet alert; (4) *aesthetically*, more capable of exercising sound judgment in all the arts; (5) *spiritually*, more filled with the divine fire which consumes the dross in ourselves and others.

A moment's reflection reveals the fact that we have no scales to weigh, no standards to measure, the most desirable qualities. Indeed, as Dr. Blacker suggests, there may be differences of opinion as to the qualities that are really desirable. But he has given an admirable lead in writing this intriguing article and I hope it may bear fruit.

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To the Editor, Eugenics Review

SIR,—The encouragement of research forms an important part of the programme of the *Eugenics Society*, as is shown by the establishment of the Leonard Darwin Research Fellowships, the subsidizing of various schemes of research, and the co-operation with the University of London in the publication of a scientific journal, the *Annals of Eugenics*. Dr. Blacker's article clearly shows that this policy does not weaken the educational and propaganda side of the *Society's* work, it strongly reinforces it. One imagines that Fellows and Members will agree with Dr. Blacker that the influence of the *Society* is usefully being brought to bear

through other organizations whose aims have a eugenic aspect and that that influence is far stronger because the *Society* is assisting the advance of knowledge as well as popularizing the knowledge that already exists. The article gives a stimulating picture of what might be done if the resources of the *Society* could be largely increased; making the promotion of research such an important part of present and future plans should be one of the best ways of ensuring the increase.

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To the Editor, Eugenics Review

SIR,—Here in East Anglia, which I am not in a position to treat merely as an elegant background to literary activities, it is difficult to dissociate problems of heredity from the problems of one's own environment. Faced as one is with the never-ending burden of schemes to improve rural housing, one would naturally like to see the result of an inquiry as to how far the traditional system of housing has affected either the quality or the number of the rural population. The villagers tell one that "people have brought up large families and good families" in the old-fashioned cottages, and one would like to know whether it is true.

Equally, one would like to know whether the present policy of interfering with people who have children and turning them out of their homes on the ground that they are "overcrowded" is, in fact, having the effect one would naturally anticipate, of reducing the number of children born.

I do not know of how much interest this information would be outside our own area: perhaps the answer depends on the answer to another question, What proportion of our population comes from the rural parts of the country? No doubt it is easy to ascertain how many people are living respectively in town and country, and how many people are born and how many die in each. It is not so easy to discover the comparative rate of fertility in town and country, and still harder to discover how many of our population are the children of those born in rural surroundings. There is therefore as yet no statistical proof of the assertion that there are no real hereditary Londoners—that London is made up of people who have moved in, or the children of those who moved in, from the country. If that were to be established, it would obviously be of immense importance in clarifying our ideas on eugenic subjects, for if it be the case that population does not reproduce itself in towns at the same rate as in the country, we should aim at assisting more to live in the country or at any rate stopping the drift to the towns. Incidentally, we should find ourselves disembarrassed of any alien problem: for it being self-evident that the alien immigrants to this country establish themselves in the towns, we should be able to reassure ourselves with the thought that they could have no permanent effect